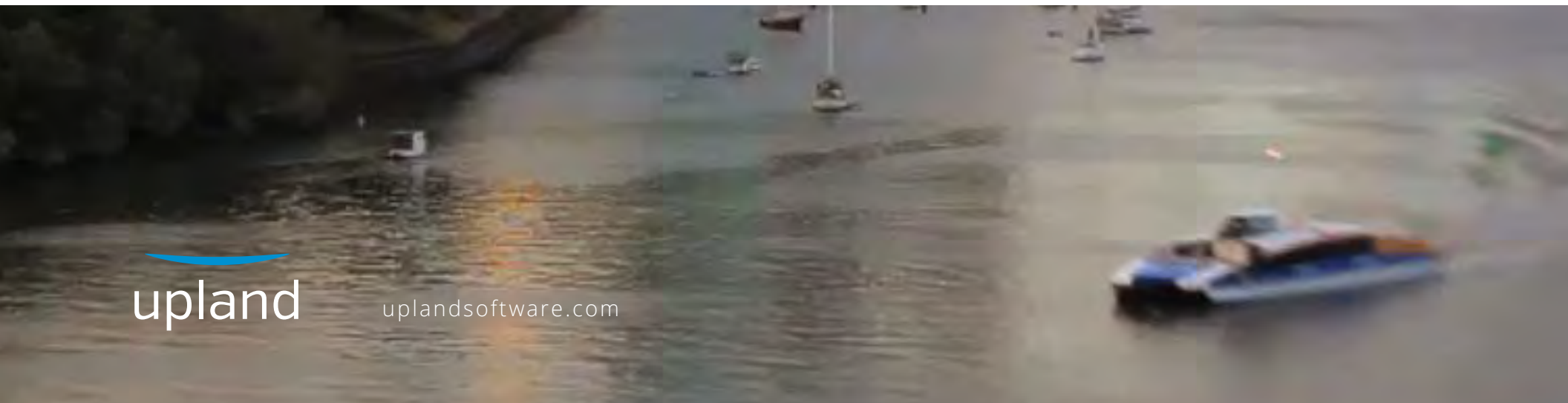




# Customer-Focused HR:

5 Information Management Technologies that Will Increase Engagement without Decreasing Privacy



  
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Technology will finally help us do something about this disengagement problem. Disengaged employees cost the US economy \$500 billion per year in lost productivity."

Karen Higgenbottom,  
"HR Technology Trends In The Workplace In 2015,"  
Forbes, January 2015

For many years, analysts have been talking about the consumerization of IT, the growing number of Millennials in the workforce and other trends that make business and IT leaders feel their systems are hopelessly outdated and inadequate. Last year I was at a major technology analyst conference where this issue was discussed and heard advice that was brilliantly simple: stop thinking of employees as users and start thinking of them as customers.

When you're a customer, you look for convenience, for a company that's easy to do business with and responds to (or maybe even anticipates) your needs quickly. Today's HR leaders need to create that environment for their employee-customers. Workplace

engagement is a complex issue, but in a competitive market with high expectations, the fewer frustrations your current and prospective employees experience, the higher your chances of retention and recruitment.

Workplace engagement starts with that first interaction. Does your company share information in a way that creates the impression that you're technologically innovative? Do you complete processes more quickly than your peers who may be recruiting the same employees? Do your employee customers feel like you understand their needs? Because HR plays a key role in those early experiences, the right technology decisions can make all the difference. And these good technology choices

can also create greater engagement for HR staff by giving them the tools they need to feel like they are able to provide great service.

One of the reasons cited for not moving to this customer-service approach is fear about security and privacy. HR has a unique responsibility to protect the organization by carefully enforcing and documenting procedures, ensuring successful audits and avoiding legal actions. In this e-book, we'll look at five technologies that not only help improve service to employees, but also increase accountability while reducing the effort on the part of your HR staff, giving them more time to focus on some of the more difficult aspects of workplace engagement.



# CHANGE

By focusing on customer service, I don't mean to imply that the workforce hasn't changed. It has, and it will continue to. That's life. But successful businesses know their customers and make sure they adjust their products and services to appeal to them. Here are some demographics you need to consider about your customers to make sure you're easy to do business with:

- More people are opting for remote or flexible work schedules. That means they may demand access to HR's services at odd hours or from outside of the network.
- Businesses employ more contractors. Getting agreements signed, maintaining records and tracking issues is more difficult because they don't have the same resources as other employees.
- Fewer of us only work with people in our narrow departments or groups. Employees need more than email to collaborate and coordinate work across departments and maybe even outside of the enterprise.
- Even onsite employees do much more work outside of the office than they used to. And they are doing it on their phones and anywhere from their couch at home to their kid's soccer game.
- Experience and comfort with technology is increasing across all age groups. The flip side of that is that people often expect to spend as much time and effort learning how to use work software and they did learning to use Facebook or their bank app.

HR's other "customer," the organization you work for is also changing in order to stay competitive and retain its customers.

- Even if your company is focused on a specific region, leadership is probably thinking globally. This might mean working with employees or contractors in other parts of the world or hiring managers with a global mindset who will ask you to try new strategies or programs in an agile, fast-changing environment.
- Frequent mergers and acquisitions are changing the amount of employee information you have to deal with, often on short notice, and frequently require data consolidation and consistent processes. Even an IPO changes financial reporting and employee training.
- Not that long ago, companies had fewer systems for managing information and performing work tasks. Now, most companies have multiple systems in place to manage data. In fact, one industry group estimates that half of all companies have three or more content management systems in use.

# Changing Workforce, Changing Workplace, continued

## TRADITIONAL, MANUAL WORK

## MODERN, KNOWLEDGE WORK



“ The average return on investment for an enterprise content management system is \$7.50 for every \$1 spent.”

Source: Nucleus Research

## Have You Completed Your Paperwork?

I'm starting from the assumption that you already have documents that are electronic. I mean, in addition to the ones that start out that way like emails, Office documents or documents generated by other systems like onboarding or payroll. You may have them in an HR system, an enterprise content management system or even a file share, but you've at least stopped using filing cabinets.

So if you haven't eliminated paper yet, should you keep reading? Yes!! Sooner or later, you're going to need to get rid of paper and organize those documents, and you're going to want to make sure the system you choose leverages these key technologies.

If you're still relying on paper for even a portion of your HR processes, you're probably experiencing one or more (if not all!) of these challenges:

- Auditing must be a nightmare. It must take forever to pull documents from filing cabinets and maybe match them up with related documents that are stored somewhere else, like a file share or an email account.

- HR staff must be spending forever pulling files to something to them or review part of the file. (And they never get put back in the wrong place or left on someone's desk, right? Because that could be a nightmare.)
- You're gambling that there won't be a disaster of any kind, natural or manmade, that would keep you out of the office. It doesn't happen to most of us, but there are lots of bad things that can happen to a filing cabinet. Even if the files aren't destroyed, what if severe weather keeps you out of the office or you need to work on an unexpected issue while you're traveling?
- You can't prove they haven't been compromised. Whether it's a drawer in your office or a locked room, there's no way to prove that no one looked at them when someone forgot to lock them up or when they sat on an employee's desk when she went to the ladies room. Or that a payroll employee didn't accidentally see a disciplinary record when she was updating a withholding form.







## 5 Information Management Technologies to Enhance HR Customer Service

1. Cloud
2. Mobile
3. Electronic Signatures
4. Integrated compliance
5. Automation



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1. Cloud

“Businesses that leverage cloud technology grow faster and are twice as profitable.”

Source: Exact 2015 SME Cloud Barometer Report, September 2015

### Employee scenario:

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You're a professional services employee, and you're at a customer site in a different time zone for the whole week. You need to review and sign the performance review your boss submitted just before you left before the end of the week to qualify for MBOs. You don't have access to those documents because you're not on the network, and you can't call HR because they aren't in the office.

### HR professional scenario:

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Your company made an acquisition and you need to get all of the employee records imported into your centralized corporate system. The IT team tells you they have to make some changes to the network to accommodate all of the new data and set up access for your HR colleagues at the acquired company. They will put your project on the list, but it will have to wait until after the "revenue generating" projects are done.





## 5 Information Management Technologies to Enhance HR Customer Service, continued

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The upland logo features the word "upland" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. Above the letter "u" is a blue curved line that resembles a stylized horizon or a smile.

1. Cloud

Obviously, scenarios like these create frustration for employees and staff. Storing employee records in the cloud means that all you need is a browser to get to the information you need. So if you work remotely or travel a lot, you can still be productive and collaborate with employees at any location. Even if your office was inaccessible due to a disaster, employee records are still safe and accessible.

The most common question we get about putting records in the cloud is whether it's secure. Assuming you're working with a reliable vendor, the answer is a resounding yes. Any vendor you work with will reassure you about the ability to set user rights so no one sees anything they aren't supposed to. That includes making sure employees only see their own records, managers only see the appropriate records for their employees and even HR employees only see documents related to their roles.

We have one customer who went even further. An HR director in a hospital, she took the security of her records very seriously. She pointed out that by storing sensitive records in the cloud, even the IT team (who would be needed to manage an onsite system) couldn't have access to them without her permission. It's not that she distrusts the IT team, specifically, but when she has an audit, she can guarantee that she knows exactly who has accessed which records.

In addition to enhancing customer service with on-demand access to HR records, cloud deployments have other advantages for the HR department, as I alluded in the second scenario. With traditional software, you have to wait for internal IT resources to be available, whether that's people time, hardware or some other constraint. With a cloud solution, the infrastructure is already there and being run by people who are experts in the software. Once

you sign a contract, work can begin immediately and be done in a fraction of the time.

You can also add or change a cloud solution quickly, so if you suddenly have to import records for employees from an acquired company or want to add a new automated workflow process, you can. That agility can distinguish HR as a responsive, service-oriented department.

Am I suggesting that you bypass IT? No way. Not only is that bad policy, but by partnering with your technical colleagues, you can create a system that integrates with other HR systems like HRIS or HCM to make sure that it is easy for users to get the information they need where they want to find it. Otherwise, instead of a customer-focused application, you'd just create one more hurdle to jump through.





“87% of Millennials say their smart phone never leaves their side, day or night.”

Source: Zogby Analytics,  
June 2014

### Employee scenario:

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You're a manager, and you need to quickly approve comp changes that just got through accounting so they can get in employees' next paycheck, but your international flight is boarding and you don't have time to pull out your computer. Your team has worked hard, and you really want to make sure they get rewarded.

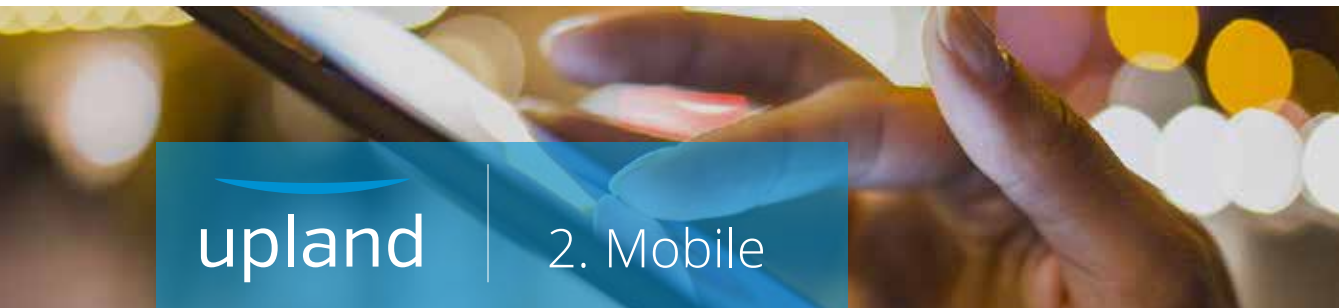
### HR professional scenario:

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You've found the perfect candidate to manage a strategic initiative, but she's also talking to your competitor and is expecting an offer letter from them. You're waiting for an executive to provide a final review and approval so you can get your offer in first, but he's traveling and unlikely to have time to log into his computer.

## 5 Information Management Technologies to Enhance HR Customer Service, continued

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So I'm not saying we should all be working 24/7, but the fact of the matter is that we use mobile devices to complete lots of tasks in those odd moments of the day. I've made bank transfers at stoplights and paid my credit card bill while waiting in line at a store. Why shouldn't I be able to approve that vacation request while I wait at the dentist or fill out a request for a job requisition when I'm on the commuter train so I can focus on my real job when I get to the office?

Virtually all customer-focused industries provide mobile apps to engage their customers. Things we consider routine approvals mean a lot to your employee-customers at all levels.

Being able to submit requests at their convenience (or upload or retrieve a document) on a device of choice prompts the kinds of quick responses mobile users appreciate. Employees also report that being able to feel efficient and productive helps them feel more engaged with their work.

Your HR staff benefits as well. Without mobile access, employees are likely to put off these tasks, either because they can't get to them or they have other priorities. That means your staff spends more time hounding them and that great candidate gets a competitor's offer letter first or an employee has to wait to get a raise because the "paperwork" wasn't completed.

Other organizations use email as a substitute for true mobile access. Maybe a staff member emails a requested document or they request approval to move ahead with a raise or a hiring decision. Using email outside of the information management system this way is not only inefficient, but it also increases risk. Once a document has been sent out via email, there is no way to track who has accessed it. And if a decision made with an email approval is questioned, it could be difficult to track down all of the interactions. Mobile access to a repository lets access and activities be logged in the system of record.





### 3. Electronic Signatures

8 out of 10 organizations that implemented digital signatures report that return on investment within a year and almost 30% say they achieved return on investment in 3 months or less."

Source: AIM Digital Signature Survey

#### Employee scenario:

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You are a high-performing sales person and (finally) got the offer letter you've been waiting for, but the new quarter is about to start, and they want you to respond quickly. To accept the position, you have to print out the application, sign it and send it back in. You're traveling, and it's kind of a hassle to find a business center to print and scan the document. You wonder if paperwork is going to be an ongoing issue.

#### HR professional scenario:

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One of your VPs has a strategic initiative and has arranged to hire a contractor. He is itching to get the project off the ground, but you're still waiting for the contractor to send back the signed contract. For liability and compliance reasons, you really need the contract before they start working, but they just didn't get around to it.



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### 3. Electronic Signatures

One of my HR colleagues told me recently that she has hired employees that she has never met in person even months after they started. It's not that they weren't well vetted or didn't go through the process. The company is highly distributed and has a number of physical offices, not all of which have an HR person onsite. And an increasing number of employees are remote so offer letters are sent all over the country or even outside of the country.

I've been in that position myself, and the hassle extends beyond the recruitment process to the onboarding process. Because once you sign the offer letter, there's the handbook verification and the non-compete agreement and a bunch of other things to print, sign and scan. (Do I need to print all five pages of the legalese on the

non-compete or can I just send the one with my signature? And look at that stack of documents I have to recycle now.) Is it a deal-breaker? No, but it's not the best impression for your first hours of work, especially when your local credit union just processed your car loan without a single paper document.

Digital signature capabilities let employees, contractors and other business partners sign documents with the click of the mouse. They are legally binding and they save time for everyone. How much more likely is it that I am going to click and sign my long awaited offer letter right away when I might not be ready or able to deal with the paper?

But digital signatures have benefits beyond the expectations of employees. They also "lock" the

document against changes and certify the signer. In a world where audits and litigation are ongoing threats, digital signatures are a win-win for both engagement and maintaining a system of record.

Many organizations have adopted forms systems that collect digital signatures, but they aren't part of the overall system of record and create yet another place where employees have to search for information. Integrating electronic signature capabilities into your overall electronic document strategy allows you to build a record that can accommodate everything from the employee resume to signed documents and forms to certifications.



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### 4. Integrated Compliance

“ Only 19% of all companies are confident in their abilities to store, retrieve, and share knowledge critical to their organization’s ability to execute its business.”

Source: Aberdeen Group  
HCM Trends Survey, 2015

#### Employee scenario:

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You’re a nurse in a state that requires regular license renewal. You completed the process and provided a copy to your employer. You get an email that they couldn’t find your license renewal when they conducted a file audit, and they can’t let you come in without it in case there is a full audit. The HR department is asking if you can provide another copy, but you just moved and aren’t sure exactly where it might be.

#### HR professional scenario:

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Two former employees are involved in a law suit and their records are subpoenaed. The court finds that there is a discrepancy in what items have been retained and question whether one of the records was changed after the law suit was filed. The company is in danger because the courts assume that any records you can’t produce support the plaintiff, and there are threats that they will make a formal complaint about the alleged tampering with the file.



The Upland logo consists of a blue curved line above the word "upland" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

### 4. Integrated Compliance

But wait, isn't compliance already part of your system of record? No doubt, but that doesn't mean that it shouldn't be more user-focused and make your employees' lives easier, not harder. While it may not have the same impact on employee-facing applications as something like mobile, it does have a huge impact on your staff by relieving them of many of the burdens of compliance. Like a lot of other enterprise applications, vendors are taking a more customer-centric approach to the way records management is used.

For instance, there are a lot of items in an employee file. Which of them are documents and which of them are records? Does everyone on your team know the difference? Do they know all of the rules for how long each item has to be kept according to various regulations? Is memorizing those rules as important or rewarding as the other jobs HR professionals have to do? What if there are various versions of the same document?

Even with the most talented staff, human errors happen. Transparently integrating records

management capability into your overall information management strategy enforces policies for actions such as retention and legal hold. That means that your staff doesn't have to worry about the time it takes or whether they did it right, and you don't have to worry that something won't be there in the case of an audit.

When records management is an integrated component of your overall information management, the system identifies which items need to be maintained as records and provides a visual cue to differentiate them from documents. Because you don't have to maintain separate systems, automated retention doesn't require a lot of expensive professional services and prolonged deployment times.\*

One of the areas you'll see the biggest payoff in consolidating and managing employee records is at auditing time, especially if you have highly complex requirements like those set by Joint Commission for healthcare organizations. No matter how many data systems you have, you can easily search a centralized repository for the

specific documents requested and even run proactive "test" audits. For example, if all employees in a certain position must have a valid certification, you can run a query to quickly check them all.

But here's the most important part. You need a documented records policy whether you implement automated retention or not. I know you know this, but for many companies, it gets put on the back burner until something bad happens. It's no fun and involves so many potential regulations. You'll also want to have your legal department review it.

The good news is that once you've answered all of the questions about what documents you have and how they should be managed, translating those into an automated process is relatively simple. Professional services colleagues often tell me that when companies aren't prepared with this kind of documentation, implementations take longer than expected (or in a worst case are delayed indefinitely) and there are cost overruns as they consult with companies on creating a records policy.

*\*Note of caution here. There has been a lot of consolidation among vendors that provide software for managing content and records. Be sure to ask if records management functionality such as automated retention is a native part of the system or an acquired component, if they use the same repository and the extent of professional services needed to make it work.*

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5. Automation

“Most organizations have yet to address more than 5% of the possible processes that could benefit from electronic workflow.”

Source: AIIIM, 2015

### Employee scenario:

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You walk into work on your first day and are taken into a room to sign your paperwork. An HR staffer busily gathers the forms she needs, realizes one is missing, sees that another one is the wrong form. Once all that is worked out and the forms are signed, she takes you to see your manager, who awkwardly explains that your work space and equipment aren't ready yet.

### HR professional scenario:

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Every truck driver on your team has to have valid HazMat certification, which has to be renewed regularly. Every month, you run a report to see whose certification is about to expire to make sure everyone gets them updated. Today, one of the drivers got in an accident, and his HazMat certification was expired, which must have somehow been overlooked or mis-entered. Your company faces significant fines, even though there was no spill.



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### 5. Automation

Customers expect fast responses. They expect outstanding service. When employees are your customers, that means quick turnarounds, immediate answers, hassle-free processes. Meeting those expectations can be difficult when there are so many other responsibilities, which is why automation is essential.

Let's consider how automation could have prevented the first scenario that made a new employee feel uncomfortable on her first day of work and made the company look disorganized or ill-prepared. As soon as the employee status was updated to hired (through an application process also managed by workflow), the system could have been configured to analyze all of the documents in the employee's record and create a checklist of required documents. Ideally, the employee would be able to sit down at her desk and complete and sign them electronically. If paper is a necessity, workflow could create the employment package and have it ready to print. As each document is received, it is checked off the list.

Simultaneously, an automated message could be sent to other departments that help to make the transition to a new job smoother.

The manager could receive a form on which he indicates what equipment and network access she would need. That form would then go to IT with her start date so they can ensure everything is ready. At the same time, a task is sent to the facilities department to make sure she has a chair, a proximity card and any other needs. On the first day of work, the HR team member responsible for welcoming her can see at a glance that everything has been taken care of.

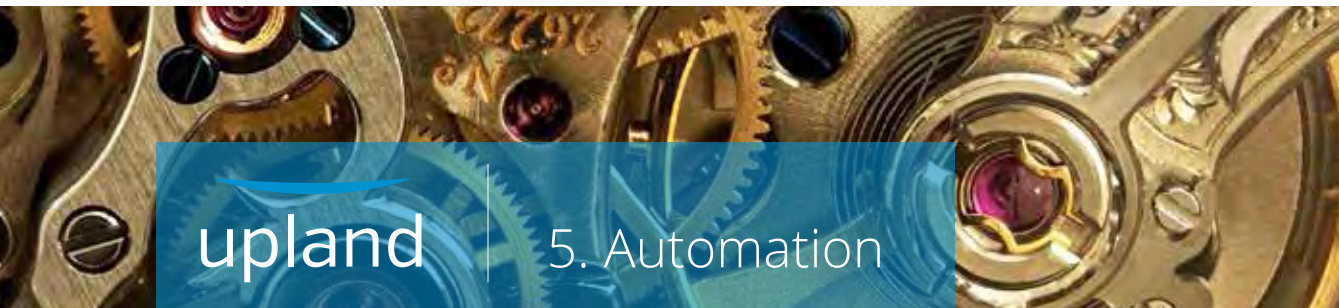
What if IT ignored the task or the facilities contact was on vacation? Without automation, there would be a series of emails and phone calls, maybe an angry visit. With automation, the system knows when someone is on vacation and sends the task to an alternative person. If it's accidentally overlooked, the system sends the "friendly reminder," and if a task still isn't completed, it can be reported to a manager or routed to another employee.

An initial investment in automated workflow can be used for all kinds of tasks that require approvals or actions. These can range from something as simple as having an employee fill out a vacation request form that is



## 5 Information Management Technologies to Enhance HR Customer Service, continued

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sent to a manager for approval to complex multi-user, multi-departmental processes. Here are a few other ways that my colleagues and I have seen automation used in HR:

- Managing the information routing associated with recruitment, from an electronic form to create a job requisition request to routing the applicant's file to all of the stakeholders, including escalating when a review is taking too long.
- Transitioning the information collected during the recruitment and onboarding processes into an employee record and automatically reviewing that record for outdated documents and sending alerts when they are nearing expiration.
- Employee review processes in which the manager completes an electronic form that is routed to HR and the employee has an opportunity to comment on and sign before it is added to the electronic employee record.
- Documenting employee disciplinary actions and routing them to the employee for notification or review.

- Exit processes including a checklist of documents and tasks to be completed by HR and other departments, such as ensuring that IT has rescinded all access to company systems.

In addition to the benefits to employees and staff, automation can also be a lifesaver for the company because it imposes the required process and maintains a record of all of the interactions. For instance, if an employee is formally reprimanded, the manager and the employee must go through the proper steps. Completing the process cannot be forgotten or ignored.

In the event of a wrongful termination suit, all of the steps in the process would be documented by the system, so you can prove what was sent, when it was sent, when it was opened and by whom, the signature of the employee and that the record wasn't tampered with. Assuming your policies and procedures are documented, you would be able to use the log as proof that they were followed. Producing this documentation is far preferable to a prolonged game of he said, she said, especially when lawyers are involved.

If you think it's time to make your HR content strategy more customer-centric, here are a few things to look for in a new or replacement system:

- 🔑 An interface that doesn't require extensive training.
- 🔑 The agility to quickly create new forms and workflows and add new users and projects.
- 🔑 Allows people to work when, where and how they choose.
- 🔑 Integration with other systems so that users may be able to access documents through the software they are currently using, eliminating disruption.
- 🔑 Creates a consolidated employee record with documents of any kind (PDF, e-form, Word document) without changing the format of those documents.
- 🔑 Allows users to collaborate on some documents and locks down other documents, depending on the need and the user role, and manages multiple versions.
- 🔑 Extends functionality outside of the traditional walls of the enterprise to foster interaction with prospective employees, contractors, separate divisions, etc.
- 🔑 Tools that empower business users to modify automated workflows, create e-forms, add users or perform other tasks on the fly.
- 🔑 A licensing model that supports engagement by not restricting the number of users.
- 🔑 Cloud facilities that have been audited by an impartial organization.

### About FileBound

Upland's FileBound delivers document and workflow automation applications that improve the operation of any organization by connecting users with the information they need to work more efficiently and effectively. With FileBound, HR departments can build automated workflow processes and centrally manage documents to improve compliance, collaboration and access to information. FileBound applications can be deployed locally or as a cloud-based service and have been implemented by organizations of all sizes around the world. For more information, visit [www.filebound.com](http://www.filebound.com).

### About Integrated Document Technologies, Inc. (IDT)

IDT helps companies eliminate paper at its source, offering consulting services and a full line of content management, data and image capture and process automation products including hardware and software systems and Internet-based electronic solutions. Since 1992, IDT has put its sole focus on creating customized document management solutions for companies in diverse industries, serving as a one-stop resource for design, integration and long-term system support. With system installations nationwide, IDT's expertise as a system designer and integrator continues to expand as new document management technologies become available. Contact IDT at 630.875.1100 or visit [www.hrecmsolutions.com](http://www.hrecmsolutions.com) or [www.idt-inc.com](http://www.idt-inc.com).

### About Upland Software

Upland (Nasdaq: UPLD) is a leading provider of cloud-based Enterprise Work Management software. Our family of applications connects people through technology, automates the flow of work and brings visibility to all aspects of the organization. With more than 1,600 customers around the globe, and over 225,000 users, Upland helps teams in IT, marketing, finance, professional services and process excellence run their operations smoothly, adapt to change quickly and achieve better results every day. To learn more, visit [www.uplandsoftware.com](http://www.uplandsoftware.com).



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